

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

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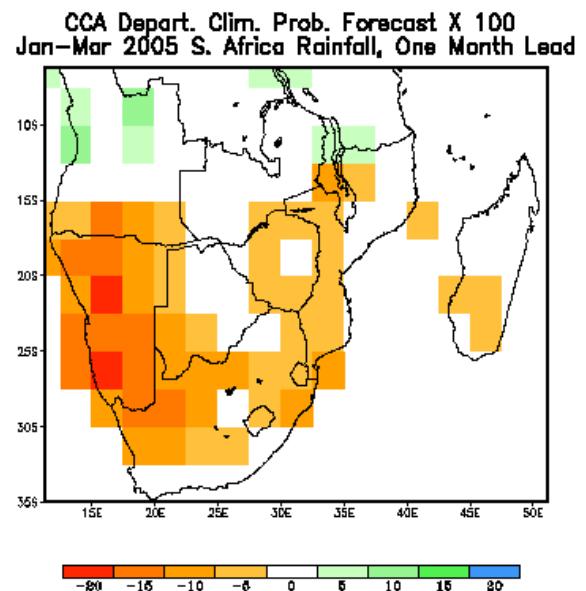
December 23 - 29, 2004

Weekly Introduction:

CCA Outlook Update: January-March 2005 Forecasts

Southern Africa

The outlook for Jan-Mar 2005 southern Africa rainfall at one month lead shows a moderate to high tilt in the odds favoring below average rainfall over Namibia and portions of southern Angola. The forecast calls for a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall across the Northern and Western Cape provinces and portions of the Maize Triangle of South Africa, most of Lesotho and Zimbabwe, Swaziland, southern and central Mozambique, and portions of southern Madagascar. There is a tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall locally over northern Angola, northern Malawi, and southern Tanzania. Climatology is expected elsewhere.



Locust Update

The report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations on the locust situation in western Africa was last updated on December 13 (<http://www.fao.org/NEWS/GLOBAL/locusts/Locuhome.htm>). The situation remains serious and widespread throughout the region. Additional details can be found at the USAID web site for Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement (AELGA) at <http://www.aelga.net> and the AGRHYMET site at <http://www.agrhymet.net>.

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NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)

1. Seasonal dryness continues in parts of eastern Ethiopia and northwestern Kenya. Long term dryness continues in much of southern Kenya and parts of northeastern Tanzania. Light to moderate rains were seen in areas of northern Tanzania during the previous week.

2. Within area 1, more severe drought is occurring in southern Kenya. Light rains are expected during the next week.

3. Dry season water resource problems continue in and around the Afar Province of northern Ethiopia due to a lack of 2004 rains.

4. Lighter than normal seasonal rains in northern Darfur and western Kurdufan in Sudan have led to hydrological problems during the dry season. A lack of drinking water is the most serious issue at the moment.

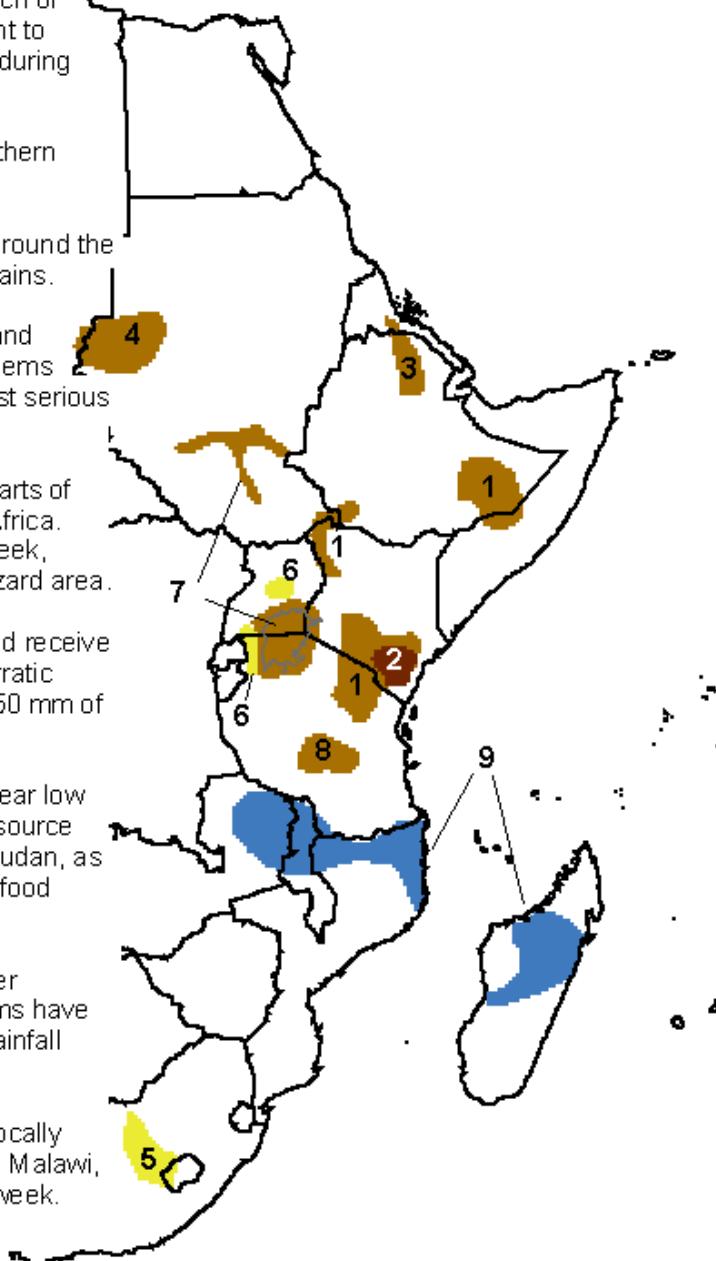
5. A lack of rains continues to negatively affect crops in parts of western Lesotho and adjacent portions of central South Africa. A cold front may pass through the area during the next week, bringing moderate rains to the southern portion of the hazard area.

6. Areas of central Uganda and northwestern Tanzania did receive some beneficial moisture during the past week, though erratic seasonal precipitation has led to continued dryness. 20-50 mm of rain is expected during the next week.

7. The Lake Victoria water level continues to be at a 10-year low due to a lack of seasonal rainfall. This has led to food resource problems downstream along the White Nile in southern Sudan, as a lack of river flooding results in poor fish and alternative food availability.

8. The Mtera Reservoir has suspended hydrological power generation due to low lake levels. No agricultural problems have been observed in the area, and between 25-150 mm of rainfall was observed in the region during the past week.

9. A nearly stationary cold front will continue to produce locally heavy rains along a swath from eastern Zambia, northern Malawi, northern Mozambique, and Madagascar during the next week. Related flooding may occur.



Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. East central Ethiopia and west central Somalia continue to have below normal precipitation totals for the past one and two years, respectively. Dryness near the Sudan/Ethiopia/Kenya border intersection has resulted from lighter than normal rainfall this year. Both of these regions have entered the dry season and little relief is expected soon. Further south, in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, one to two years of below normal rainfall have reduced soil moisture. During the previous period light showers fell in the area, and are again possible next week.
2. Inland southeastern Kenya, east of area (1) the multi-year drought continues to affect water resources. Over the last month conditions have improved, however rainfall deficits remain significant. Little to no rain this past week has also slowed the potential recovery, though showers are possible next week.
3. Inadequate precipitation in the Afar region in north central Ethiopia, has lowered drinking water levels and caused pasture degradation. As the rainy season has come to a close, moisture deficits will remain into the next season that begins in April 2005.
4. Northern Darfur and northwestern Kurdofan in Sudan had a short 2004 season where the rains began late and ended early. The abbreviated season had precipitation that was erratic, stressing irrigated agriculture, lowering water supplies, drying out wells, and producing unfavorable pasture conditions. The moisture deficits continue to negatively affect the area currently experiencing a humanitarian crisis. The next wet season should begin in July 2005.
5. On the western edge of the Maize Triangle region of South Africa, earlier dry conditions continue to improve. During the previous week the area received significant rainfall that continued to raise soil moisture. A front moving through South Africa will provide additional rainfall for the coming period. Continued precipitation will ease seasonal dryness.
6. Central Uganda and northwestern Tanzania are continuing to experience short-term dryness. Some precipitation fell on the area during the past week keeping deficits from rising. The coming week will bring continued showers to the effected area.
7. Lake Victoria's water levels remain at a ten-year low as a result of below normal rainfall in the catchment basin. This has led to a poor flow of water downstream into the White Nile in associated Sobat and Jur tributaries in southern Sudan. The lack of river flooding in these areas has negatively impacted fish and wild food availability in northern Bahr Al Gazal, Unity, Jongli, and Lakes States. The Lake Victoria Basin did receive moderate rainfall during the past week, and additional rains are expected during the next week.
8. Hydroelectric power remains suspended as a result of low water levels in the Mtera Reservoir. Local agriculture has not been affected by the slightly lower than normal seasonal rainfall. Lighter than normal precipitation in central and southwestern Tanzania during 2004 has reduced rainfall over the Rufiji River Basin. The past month has seen steady rainfall and in the coming week more rain is expected.
9. Across central Madagascar, northern Mozambique, northern Malawi, and northeastern Zambia, localized flooding may have occurred as a result of heavy rains. The excessive rainfall is the result of a nearly stationary front. The front is expected to remain in the region during the next week, and the heavy rains will likely continue.

AUTHOR: Timothy B Love and Eric Wolovsky

Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Alvin.Miller@noaa.gov or 1-301-763-8000 x7552

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